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Finance Committee Minutes 02-19-2003

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

7:30 PM O'Neill room, community safety building

2/19/03

ATTENDEES:

Janowitz*	Feinleib*	O'Riordan*	O'Neill	Mahoney*
DeCoursey	Connors*	Simmons	Morrisette	
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst*	Ronan*	
Piandes	Franclemont*	Jones*	Olsen	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning	Tosi*	Kneeland*

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Paul Bayer, Robin Schoenthaler, Town Moderator John Worden, Conservation Commission Chair Beth Cohen, Vision 2020 Members Jane Howard (CoChair), Gene Benson, Bill Eykamp, Elizabeth Karpati, Leslie Mayer, Steve Ricci, Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park (FoMRP) Chair Clarissa Rowe, Conservation Commission Member David White, Paul Schlichtman

MINUTES of 2/12/03 accepted. Unanimous

GENERAL: Tosti has provided letters to all appointing authorities with the latest distribution model as decided Feb. 12. Members received copies of model and were again asked to review the fixed costs. Copies of the Planning Department Reuse Study were provided. All members were asked to review this study in preparation for a future discussion.

ARTICLE 65 APPROPRIATION/WEED TREATMENT: Vision 2020 members reviewed the recent history (in handout) of invasive weed treatment in Spy Pond, the Reservoir, and Hill's Pond. Treatment has been effective but cannot be permanent since waterfowl carry in seeds from other places. The cost of treating the water chestnuts in the Reservoir is declining since this plant is an annual, and harvesting its seeds reduces the volume of material the following year. All treatment chemicals have been in use for years with no effect on humans or wildlife. The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park will again pay for treatment at Hill's Pond, but wish to be included in the vote of Town Meeting. \$15,000 for the Reservoir treatment is in the Capital Plan. \$35,000 was requested for Spy Pond. There are no funds remaining from previous appropriations. The Finance Committee and the Vision 2020 members discussed the dam at the Reservoir. Though there is money in the Capital Plan, there seems to be doubt about what the dam plans are.

A motion to appropriate \$17,500 for Spy Pond treatment with the rest to come from the Spy Pond abutters failed 3-10.

VOTED no action without an override or \$35,000 with an override. 12-1.

ARTICLE 30 LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: Benson was asked to discuss this article, though he was not prepared. He hopes that the Town will adopt a national "silver" standard to govern new municipal construction. He said that adhering to this standard would make buildings more environmentally efficient while reducing costs. Responding to questions, Benson said the payback period for steps required to meet the standard is usually rather short and sometimes, with rebates, the initial cost is less.

The Finance Committee will not report on this article.

ARTICLE 13 BYLAW AMENDMENT/ASSISTANT MODERATOR: Worden said he wants to replace the "clumsy" procedure for

..... to elect a temporary moderator when the regular moderator is absent or wishes to step down temporarily. He would have the Annual Town Meeting elect an assistant moderator at the first meeting who would serve for a year with no pay. Finance Committee members suggested that were the moderator to step down to join the debate, he would spoil his charisma.

The Finance Committee will not report on this article.

ARTICLE 56 COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS: Cohen described the activities of the 7 Historic District Commissions and provided a budget handout. She requested \$4,200, the same as last year. A few hundred dollars were carried over last year. She expects the same this year. In answer to questions, she said that applicants for permits are not charged a fee. She believes this policy encourages property owners to follow the Historic District rules. Cohen also requested that the Historical Commission be level funded. Finance Committee members stated that because the Town's committees & commissions provide the Town with skilled volunteers at a very low cost, these bodies should be encouraged to continue to operate.

VOTED to reduce the budgets of all committees and commissions 10%. Unanimous.

VOTED to recommend \$3,780 for the Historic District Commissions. Unanimous.

VOTED to recommend \$2,160 for the Historical Commission. Unanimous.

ARTICLE 10 BYLAW AMENDMENT/PARKING METERS: Schlichtman stated that the \$.05/hour rate in the bylaw is much less than surrounding communities pay, according to a handout he provided. He also described promising new parking meter designs being introduced elsewhere. Jones reported on his parking-meter investigation assignment. He found that, with the restaurant-related traffic, both the police and business now favor parking meters. If installed on Mass Ave, he estimated annual income of several hundred thousand dollars.

VOTED to recommend a bylaw change from \$.05/hr max to a rate set by the Board of Selectmen. 11-2. The chair will add a comment to the Finance Committee report encouraging the Board of Selectmen to introduce this change because of the expected cash return.

ARTICLE 14 HOME RULE LEGISLATION/BEER WINE AND MALT SALE LICENSE: Schlichtman introduced this article at the request of his constituents. The Finance Committee will not report.

ARTICLE 22 TOWN ELECTRICAL LOAD AGGREGATOR: Schlichtman proposes that the town purchase electric power for all Town users, both public and private. This bulk purchase might enable a lower price. He sees this as a step towards owning the distribution system. Since the article involves a home rule petition only, there is no appropriation required. The Finance Committee will not report on this article.

COMMITTEE: No meeting Monday. Next mtg Wed, 2/26/03.

RESERVE FUND BALANCE \$300,000

Peter B. Howard
Secretary 2/20/03

Budget & Article Action Summary

Bud #	Date presented	Date of vote	\$	Vote	Art#	Date presented	Date of vote	\$	Vote/assigned to
1					10	2/19	2/19	bylaw chng	11-2
2					12	2/8	2/8	support	
3					13	2/19		no report	
4					14	2/19		no report	
5					15	2/11	2/11	no report	Unanimous

